N080-630 ERIC REPORT RESUME

ED 010 134 1-06-67 24 (REV)

FINDING AND DEVELOPING IDEAS, RHETORIC OF THE SENTENCE--RHETORIC CURRICULUM II, TEACHER VERSION.

KITZHABER, ALBERT
RQR60230 UNIVERSITY OF OREGON, EUGENE

CRP-H-149-5
BR-5-0366-5
- -65
EDRS PRICE MF-$0.09 HC-$0.52 13P.

*CURRICULUM GUIDES, *RHETORIC, SEVENTH GRADE, *STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS, GRAMMAR, LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION, *TEACHING GUIDES, *ENGLISH CURRICULUM, EUGENE, OREGON, PROJECT ENGLISH, NEW GRAMMAR

THIS REPORT PRESENTED TEACHING GUIDES FOR A SEVENTH-GRADE RHETORIC CURRICULUM. SUGGESTIONS AND BACKGROUND IN FORMATION WERE PRESENTED WITH LESSONS APPROPRIATE FOR--(1) FINDING AND DEVELOPING IDEAS, AND (2) RHETORIC OF THE SENTENCE. AN ACCOMPANYING GUIDE WAS PREPARED FOR STUDENTS (ED 010 133). (WN)

ED010134

50366-5
(H149)

OREGON CURRICULUM STUDY CENTER

FINDING AND DEVELOPING IDEAS

RHETORIC OF THE SENTENCE

Rhetoric Curriculum II

Teacher Version

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION AND WELFARE
Office of Education
This document has been reproduced exactly as received from the person or organization originating it. Points of view or opinions stated do not necessarily represent official Office of Education position or policy.

The project reported herein was supported through the Cooperative Research Program of the Office of Education, U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

OREGON CURRICULUM STUDY CENTER

FINDING AND DEVELOPING IDEAS

RHETORIC OF THE SENTENCE

Rhetoric Curriculum II
Teacher Version

The project reported herein was supported through the Cooperative Research Program of the Office of Education, U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

OREGON CURRICULUM STUDY CENTER

FINDING AND DEVELOPING IDEAS

Rhetoric Curriculum II

Teacher Version

Copyright ©
University of Oregon
Eugene, Oregon
All Rights Reserved

Teacher Version

I

Composition texts have often tended to separate finding ideas to write about from developing those ideas for a reader. These lessons try to avoid that tendency and, so far as possible, to reverse it.

Behind the tendency lurks the old assumption that content--the ideas that are discovered--is, for practical purposes at least, separable from form--the sentences and paragraphs into which the ideas are cast for the purpose of serving them up to the public. We do not wish to suggest that there can be no tactical justification for making a separation between content and form in order to offer explanations of how prose operates; but we do suggest that to begin with that assumption when we are teaching writing does more harm to the students than it does good. It is, we suggest, more helpful to begin with the assumption that form and content are inseparable, and, consequently, that finding and developing ideas are really the same operation.

One of the immediate consequences of taking this tack is that we no longer feel obligated, for pedagogical purposes, to classify kinds of form; the four forms of discourse and the seventeen or nineteen, or whatever number, kinds of paragraph disappear from the scene. Instead, the methods of development are acknowledged to be as diverse as the individual ways of discovering and exploring ideas.

In these lessons we are not so pure as to have escaped entirely the need to classify methods of finding and developing, but we hope that we have not let our hesitant naming of kinds of finding and developing coerce the student into writing in particular, prescribed patterns.

II

If we say, with Violet Paget in The Handling of Words and Kenneth Burke in Counter-Statement, that form is the arousing and satisfaction of the reader's appetites and expectations, we have an attitude toward the discovery and development of ideas which allows them to be treated as the same operation and which justifies infinite diversity in structure. A title that says "The Meanest Man in the World" leads the reader to expect something in the essay. A first sentence that says "Blifil is the meanest man in the world because he hates dogs" arouses further expectations but also begins to channel those expectations. And so on.

If we approach content and form in this way, we can ask the student (and, what is more important, he can ask himself): Have you fulfilled your implied promise to the reader? And we can talk about the success or failure of his form, not in the technical jargon of form, but in terms of how well he succeeded in the job he promised to do. And, further, we can show him that his failures in form are failures to sufficiently develop his ideas--that he has failed to explore his ideas sufficiently to fulfill the promise that lay in them.

Looking in another direction, we see that the student must develop what he is writing according to the individual experience he has available to him and according to his individual way of exploring and understanding his experience. His style of writing, then, is the style of his experience and the style of his understanding, and we can avoid asking him to superimpose a questionably appropriate "style" on "what he is saying." We can limit our talk with him to what he is saying and how well he has fulfilled the potential that lies in what he is saying.

III

Throughout these lessons we assume that when we develop an idea we begin with something large and vague which we can, and ordinarily do, name with an appropriately large and vague word. But naming the idea, if it is necessary to give it a name, should only be a beginning. What the idea and the experience behind it hold need to be explored in detail if their value is to be discovered. These lessons are designed to lead students to name their ideas and then to explore them in detail in order to discover their qualities and their value. We are also assuming that one way of writing (the way emphasized here) follows this same method of development. An idea is named, something is said about it in general terms, and then the expectations aroused by the name and what is said about it are explored and expounded.

The students are given samples of writing by professional writers which follow this pattern. They are asked to discover the kinds of expectations which are set up by the statements these writers make and then to examine the development that fulfills the expectations. To put it in other words, the writer's purpose is to fulfill the expectation his statement aroused, and the student is asked to examine how the writer succeeded in fulfilling his purpose.

Then the student is asked to make a statement of his own and to set himself the task of discovering and developing the significant life that lies under the bald statement.

The first lesson attacks a preliminary problem, but it is a problem that presents itself afresh in every writing assignment. It is the problem of translating a world that is perceived spatially into the linear structure of prose.

The following lessons present problems of increasing complexity, but each lesson asks the student to formulate general statements about his reactions to his experiences, and then to re-examine each experience in order to articulate its texture and significance. Under all of the lessons lies the assumption that the way to convey our feelings to our readers is to present them with a verbal representation of what it was that caused us to have the feelings in the first place. One might quarrel with this assumption, and we must certainly admit from the beginning that it is an expedient over-simplification. But we can plead that, so long as it is not taken too literally, the advantages which it gains by being clear and simple outweigh any disadvantages.

In the final lesson the student is asked to choose a set of feelings and attitudes which he is willing to examine, stand behind, publish, and proselytize. Now, he is not only asking for understanding of his feelings and taking the responsibility upon himself of making understanding available, he is also taking the added responsibility of saying that the way he feels is the way others should feel too. The moral responsibility has broadened and become public. And now the student must not only be able to defend the truth of his feelings and the justice of his plea for understanding, but he must also justify his desire to transfer his feelings and attitudes to others.

IV

LESSON ONE - PURPOSE COMES FIRST

This short lesson cannot lead a student to solve all the problems involved in translating a spatial arrangement into words, but, as it stands, it probably spends more time than it should treating such problems in isolation. Along the way, however, the student is given practice in giving directions to a live audience, he is reminded that any description must be designed to suit a purpose, and the final writing assignment gives his imagination plenty of freedom to go its own way and, at the same time, encloses his efforts within a definable purpose. Because there is a stated purpose for all of the descriptions the student is asked to write, it is possible to criticize his work on the basis of how well he has fulfilled his purpose.

The first model and the first set of questions are designed to demonstrate to the student that there is a rationale underlying any arrangement, a rationale which results from the purpose of the arrangement and, in turn, determines the structure of the arrangement. He learns that a good description of an arrangement is based on understanding the rationale behind the arrangement.

The second section begins by explaining that the writer's purpose in making his description will be different from the purpose of the arrangement itself, and the writer must understand both purposes and take them into account if he is to succeed. The student is asked to compare the second model with the first in order to discover how the writers' different purposes resulted in different kinds of descriptions. Question 5 following the second model, asks the student to alter the purpose of the description slightly and to explore what difference this might make in the description. The teacher, if he feels it is necessary, might vary the writer's purpose still further and pursue the discussion.

The first writing exercise assumes, perhaps too patly, that the purpose of a scene is to provide the background for an action, and the student is asked to explore the relationship between scene and action. The short speaking assignment elaborates on the same problem, but because the details of the narrative are before the class this time, the student can be held more strictly accountable for the relationship between scene and action.

Probably the teacher will want to discuss the speech and attendant problems at least one day before the speeches are scheduled to be given. To save class time he may also wish to hear speeches only from those students who need the practice the most.

In the final writing assignment the student is asked, theoretically, to use a camera as imaginatively as he can. The results will undoubtedly vary as widely as the abilities of the students, and the poorer student perhaps will not enjoy any great success. It is hoped, however, that even the poorer students will be stimulated by the assignment, and, because the assignment is open-ended, that it will give the more imaginative students plenty of freedom.

LESSON TWO - EXPRESSING THOSE FEELINGS

This lesson begins the main body of the year's work in composition, and its rationale should now be self-explanatory.

The writing assignment and almost all of the following writing assignments depend on the notebooks the students are asked to keep. The more work the students can be encouraged to do in these notebooks, the easier the task of completing the writing assignments will be. The notebooks, too, can be used to encourage the students to think outside of class about their writing assignments. All writers know that an important part of the work of writing is often done not when one is sitting down to the job but when one is riding on a bus, taking a shower, or simply walking along a street. Students should be encouraged to use their spare time in this way as much as possible. One way to encourage them is to make the assignment and give the students time to get started on it one day, and then have them finish up and revise on the second day.

LESSON THREE - SECOND THOUGHTS

The first paragraph from White's little essay is very difficult to read, and even above-average students will probably need some help with it. But the subsequent work in this lesson does not hinge on the student's having a detailed understanding of the first paragraph of the essay. If he only gets the word <u>moving</u>, he can still get the point of the assignment.

Exercise III brings up choice of words. In the present context it is possible to point out that no one word has intrinsic values that make it inherently "better" than another word. Instead, a word is only good or bad in relation to the work it is supposed to be doing. In this case (questions 5, 6, and 7) the job of the word is to describe White's reactions. The students will undoubtedly discover that no one word can do a very good job, and, consequently, they must explore the possibility of using combinations of words, phrases and clauses.

The writing assignment is somewhat more complex than the previous assignments have been. The student is asked to keep more material under control than he has before, and he is asked to set up one expectation

in the mind of the reader, then remove it, and replace it with another.

The student will probably discover too that the words he used initially to describe his feelings no longer seem adequate after he has examined the experience in detail, and he will probably wish to re-write his opening.

LESSON FOUR - MIXED FEELINGS

Nothing new is introduced in this lesson, but the task given to the student is made more complex than it was before.

LESSON FIVE - FOR YOU TO FIND

In this lesson the student is specifically asked to dispense with the general statements he has been using as starters. He may, of course, still use them for his own purposes, but they must not appear in the final paper. It is hoped that he will discover that although such abstract words are useful in their place, it is possible, if one's purpose is better served that way, to get along without them.

LESSON SIX - THE LAUGH WAS ON ME

In this lesson the student is asked to add another dimension to what he has done in the past. His purpose now is not only to convey an understanding of his feelings, but to take a humorous attitude toward them himself and to successfully convey to other people both his feelings and his humorous attitude toward them.

LESSON SEVEN - I'M SURE YOU'LL AGREE

This lesson extends what was done in Lesson Six. The student not only tells his feelings, explains his attitudes toward his own feelings, but he also takes the responsibility of convincing others that his feelings and his attitudes are just and deserving of propagation. The class might profitably discuss the added responsibilities one takes on when one goes from merely asking for sympathy and understanding to proselytizing for his feelings and attitudes.

LESSON EIGHT - OPINIONS

In the preceding lessons the student has learned to distinguish between simply reporting experience and interpreting it. He has explored his own attitudes toward events, and he has experimented with ways of eliciting responses like his own from the reader. The attitudes he has been directed to recognize have been largely what he likes and what he dislikes. He should take one further step, for opinion is not entirely a matter of what he likes; it is also what he sees value in, whether he likes it or not.

The example in the Student Version suggests that when he refuses chocolate candy (which he likes) because it is not good for him, he is expressing an opinion beyond simple preference. This kind of value judgment is an essential part of opinion, particularly in determining policy.

In this lesson the student is given three Indian speeches, each one recommending a policy to guide relations with the white man. Red Cloud urges rejection of the white man's standards and seductive bribes --especially liquor. He does not propose war in this speech, but he does criticize the callous selfishness of the white man in biting irony. Spotted Tail urges non-resistance. He had been imprisoned for two years in the "soldier-town," the fort, and had seen the endless stream of white men arriving. He believed that the day of the Indian was over, and that the old life could never be restored. Sitting Bull makes the most belligerant speech of the three; he argues openly for war. His picture of white men is much like Red Cloud's, and he offers a perhaps more outrageous piece of evidence of the white man's deceit--the violation of the treaty.

The selection by Seton effectively demonstrates that the best opinion comes from the man who has proved himself worthy of respect. The class may refine this point further to include knowledge, judgment, and integrity as the necessary characteristics of the man whose opinions can be respected.

OREGON CURRICULUM STUDY CENTER

RHETORIC OF THE SENTENCE

Rhetoric Curriculum II

Teacher Version

Copyright © 1964
University of Oregon
Eugene, Oregon
All Rights Reserved

RHETORIC OF THE SENTENCE

The rhetoric of the sentence in the eighth grade continues to build on e premises that were laid down in the rhetoric of the sentence for the seventh grade. Those premises can be found in the teacher version of the seventh grade unit on rhetoric of the sentence.

In the eighth grade we deal with the rhetoric of three transforma - tions which are taught in the eighth grade grammar: the passive transformation, the question transformation, and the sentence conjunction, but the treatment of even these three transformations is not exhaustive. Specifically, the exercises point out the relationship of active and passive sentences to point of view, two uses of rhetorical questions, and the joining of sentence conjunctions with and c. but.

As in the seventh grade, we assume that the grammar of the sentence should be taught before the rhetoric of the sentence; the student should understand how a passive sentence is formed before he investigates what is involved in choosing an active or a passive verb to do the particular job he wants done.

SUGGESTIONS TO THE TEACHER

1. Exercise I points out that there is a connection between using active or passive sentences and point of view. In this exercise and in the exercises that follow on the passive transformation, we must be careful not to be too doctrinaire about this connection. The connection is subtle and wavering, not solid and direct. London probably did make the first sentence passive in order to make dogs the subject--at least this makes sense after the fact, but it should be presented as a possibility not as a certainty. The point we can stress is the importance of being sensitive to point of view when we are writing; we are not interested in committing an intentional fallacy that would be impossible to defend. Nevertheless, making the first sentence passive did affect the point of view, and it should be pointed out to the student that he can create similar effects.

2. The same warning holds for Exercise II. Putting the sentences about Dave in the passive does affect the point of view from which we see him, and it does affect our attitude toward him. But many other things are involved in creating these effects, and too much stress should not be placed on the role that the passive verbs play. Probably London could have created a very similar effect with active verbs, if he had gone about it in a different way. But,generally speaking, using passive verbs tends to give the effect of passivity, and this should be pointed out to the student, so long as we don't oversimplify the cause and effect connection.

3. Probably you should insert the traditional warning about too many passive verbs somewhere along the line. Active verbs tend to lend vigor to prose; passive verbs tend to sap it. But overuse of the passive is a notorious malady of bureaucrats, not of eighth graders.

4. There is no simple answer to the problem posed in Exercise III. Giving the shoelace the verb striving, which is active semantically if not grammatically, is hyperbolic, and whether the student was wise to use it or not is a delicate question which the class may wish to discuss. The writer was trying for an effect by going from a semantically active verb to the passive verb at the end. Two questions arise: "Was the device successful?" and "Was it worth doing?"

5. Exercise IV can be used as a written assignment if you feel that the students are prepared for it; it can be used as a basis for class discussion of sample student papers, or it can be used as a written assignment after discussing some sample papers.

6. Allow the students time to read the paragraph by Gertrude Stein carefully. Then ask a student to read it aloud. Let the class collectively decide how each sentence should be intoned.

7. It is probably wise to go lightly on the rhetorical question. It is a device that an eighth grader can easily overuse. On the other hand, overusing rhetorical questions for a few weeks will probably do a good deal more good than harm in the long run.

8. No student should have more than the normal amount of difficulty with the first part of Exercise III; the second part is more difficult, and it will probably need some preparation if it is to be used as a written assignment.

9. The rhetoric of sentence conjunctions is carried no farther than the choice between and and but. Exercise I should cause most students little difficulty, and most students will probably be interested in comparing their answers to the choices London actually made. Encourage the students to give reasons for their choices, even when, or especially when, their choices disagree with London's. Exercise II should probably be preceded by a discussion of representative student papers.